



Meeting Minutes

Zoning Code

Citizen Advisory Group Meeting

5:00 p.m. – Wednesday, July 22, 2009

Staff Conference Room, 211 W. Aspen Ave. Flagstaff, AZ

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

In attendance

Gary Nelson, Chairperson, Landscaping
Steve Nelson, Chairperson, Trees and Resources
Wes Lockwood, Chairperson, Outdoor Lighting
Daniel Paduchowski, Chairperson, Design Guidelines
Phil Scandura, Vice Chairperson, Signage
Phil Keesee, Chairperson, Signage
Kim Tittelbaugh, Chairperson, Neighborhood Planning
Kara Kelty, Chairperson, Process & Procedures
Gerry Craig, Vice Chair, Outdoor Lighting
Roger E. Eastman, Zoning Code Administrator
Ed Larsen, Chairperson, Building/Fire Code
Eric Souders, Vice Chairperson, Economic Development
Kathi Clark, Vice Chairperson, Downtown and Housing
Kent Hotsenspillier, Vice-chair Process and Procedures

2. **Recap of Citizen Advisory Group's purpose**

Brief recap.

3. **Approval of minutes: July 1, 2009**

One change was noted on page 4, sub-paragraph h., line 3; replace as follows "the tools needed to implement the Regional Plan".

Approval was moved by Ed Larsen and seconded by Gary Nelson; carried unanimously.

4. **Public Comments:**

No members of the public were in attendance at the meeting.

5. **Update from City staff on the zoning code project and the Focus Groups**

- Quick update from Focus Groups that are complete and review of on-going Focus Groups, especially Design Guidelines group. Update on image project for the design guidelines. Great support for this.
- July consultant visit was really successful.
- Design charrette will be held October 5 – 9th.
- Focus Groups are doing really well – members are enthusiastic and making an important contribution to the process of updating the zoning code. Only

Signage, Landscaping and Design Guidelines are still meeting. Signage should conclude this week; Landscaping should conclude next week. The Design Guidelines Focus Group will complete in early August.

- As soon as Roger can (realistically it will be toward the end of July/early August) he will consolidate the Focus Group resolved issues into a report that will be forwarded onto the consultants. This will also be posted to the webpage. At the same time he will be tracking all the issues that overlap from one Focus Group to another, and these will also be forwarded onto the consultants. Ideas suggested by the Focus Groups that not directly relevant to the zoning code project will be forwarded on to the City staff who can implement them, e.g. policy ideas for the Regional Plan.

6. Discussion on the challenges facing the Focus Groups and issues that overlap between Focus Groups

At the encouragement of the chair, the group was invited to share their thoughts on “overlapping themes” between Focus Groups, and “challenges”.

Overlapping Themes:

- a. Lighting and Signage
 - Brief discussion on the need to address modern sign technologies – regulate the effect of the technology was the preferred approach. (This was also discussed in the last meeting – see note i.)
 - Signage – Check to ensure that the placement of signs is not in conflict with other standards for the preservation of trees and placement of landscaping.
- b. Consensus that the new code needs to be tested using established site plans for such aspects as landscaping, resources, etc.
- c. Additional conversation on the need for training once the new code is in place.
 - Training will be done by City staff and not the consultant.
 - Emphasized that the training must include staff and the public/users of the code in the same sessions.
- d. Repeat conversation on the importance of documenting the history of the code
 - City staff will do this; not the consultants
 - Suggestion to format the manual as a series of bullets to keep it simple and to help the reader
 - Manual needs to include a history of decision making and why certain things are in the code (a philosophical synopsis), and an explanation of the regulations (user guide).

Challenges:

- a. Design guidelines group – strengthening design guidelines and implement form-based codes allows more flexibility in the application of resources.
 - It is important to allow flexibility in the calculation of resources so that they do not dominate the design of a site and its buildings. Code should not dictate design. This was also captured last meeting.
 - Level I and Level II requirements in the design guidelines – designers have found that they may not be able to apply these levels because the engineering standards and resource calculations dictate what can be done and good design becomes secondary.
 - Need to deal with the conflict between inflexible engineering standards and the need to preserve resources. E.g. fire station north of Route 66 opposite Enterprise where the grades dictate the development possibility on the site.
 - Figure out how to create mechanisms to alleviate the conflict. One way is to develop mitigation strategies as was discussed by the Trees and Resources Focus Group on July 20th.
- b. Adding a citizen Design Review Board (DRB).
 - Design guidelines group agreed that a citizen DRB was not needed. Instead they recommended that when the existing design guidelines are strengthened, there would not be a need for the DRB.
 - One major reason was a concern for slowing the review process;
 - However, they strongly recommended the implementation of a pre-application step because more contact with staff is helpful. This was also an attempt to encourage the use of design professionals on a project. E.g. an idea to require concept sketches as early as possible in the submittal.
- c. Detailed conversation on the role/importance of a pre-application meeting.
 - A pre-application meeting is an incentive in the eventual outcome of the project. City documents the result of the pre-application meeting
 - City already has a voluntary pre-application requirement – no fee. It's an opportunity for a developer to meet with City staff to brainstorm and share needs, and for both parties to understand and the City's desires for the project. Comments are not binding ... yet the pre-application meeting helps to protect the applicant as well as the City.
 - Consensus from the group that this should be a mandatory meeting.
 - Suggestion -- make the need for a pre-application meeting scalable to the size of the project.
 - Need to balance a desire for the pre-application meeting with the costs associated with preparing for the meeting. Should not be significant though as the intent of this pre-application meeting is that it is a very conceptual discussion. Intent is for staff to inform a client of what he can do, rather than what he cannot do, i.e. to be more proactive.
 - Better connectivity between the desires of the City and the economic impact to development from application of such things as the design guidelines, etc.

- Reinforce incentives in the design guidelines to make them more useable. (Also discussed in the July 1st CAG meeting).
- It was noted that the subjectivity of the current LDC is the cause of the need for so many meetings and the lack of consensus on what is possible – with a more predictable code, there will be better understanding by all users. Code must also offer options and variety, i.e. promote flexibility.
- Pre-application meeting as the staff have already instituted is essential to discuss a preliminary site. It's an opportunity for an applicant to work with staff to design the project in a "mini-charrette format". Simple conceptual site plan and tracing paper on which ideas can be expressed. The meetings need to be informal and not binding. Intent is to build consensus and understanding. The Single Point of Contact will ensure consistency.
- It is important that all suggestions are honored by both staff and the applicant.
- Increase the number of meetings with staff to enhance understanding of needs and desires from both staff and developers.

Other topics of discussion:

- a. Downtown Focus Group – strongly support more residential in Downtown.
 - HPC will be making recommendations on historic preservation issues for the City.
- b. Discussion on future steps and review of the drafts as they are released for review.
 - Clarification of roles and expectations of the Focus Groups and the CAG
- c. Relationship between the existing county zoning code and the city's zoning code needs to be thought about in the Regional Plan process.
 - Ensure that the code does not result in development not being in the City and in the county instead because it's easier to develop there.
 - Also ensure consistency between the Regional Plan and the zoning code (not necessarily a direct role of the CAG).

8. Next meeting

None in the immediate future. Good job all – thanks!

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Minutes recorded and compiled by:

Roger E. Eastman, AICP, Zoning Code Administrator